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The founder of STS, Dr. R. Segalman, is a friend of mine since 1968. Until STS was developed,it was extremely difficult for us to stay in touch. EMail was not available, and his speechdifficulties made telephone completely impossible. We actually lost touch until he developed STS and I learned of it. The system has made possible the renewal of a fine friendship, and the lack of it deprived me of his friendship and him of mine.

I have been very very lucky in my telephone conversations with people who have speech difficulties.The voicers have been very professional, announcing the other party and keeping their personal thoughts and feelings out of the conversation. They did a good job of relaying the words of the person with a speech problem. My experience is very limited, however, and I've learned that myexperience is not typical at all. I understand that operators are often sloppy, intolerant, egocentric, and ill-paid. This is not acceptable. To fail to ensure this does not happen is to deprive peoplewith speech difficulties of their right to participate in and contribute to the kind of life the rest of us take for granted.

Operators need to stay on the call long enough to get used to the way the PERSON with a speech disability talks. Operators should tell callers that everything is confidential. People with a speech disability need an easy way to reach Speech-To-Speech. More people with speech disabilities need to be taught to use STS. All these statements also apply to people who use STS on the computer. There should be competition, as that makes STS work better. The operators need to be paid enough so that they do a good job, and they need good training.